DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 297 456 EA 020 202

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TITLE Models of Teacher Evaluation. Policy Bulletin No. 2.
INSTITUTION Consortium on Educational Policy Studies, Bloomington, IN.
SPONS AGENCY Indiana Univ., Bloomington. School of Education.; Lilly Endowment, Inc., Indianapolis, Ind.
PUB DATE Apr 88
NOTE 5p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Legislation; *Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; Evaluation Criteria; Evaluation Methods; Public Schools; School Districts; State Legislation; *Teacher Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS *Indiana

ABSTRACT

This bulletin summarizes: (1) the Indiana law (HB 1360) that requires public schools to implement teacher performance evaluations as a condition of accreditation, (2) a recent study of teacher evaluation plans and techniques commissioned for the Indiana Department of Education by the Consortium on Educational Policy Studies at Indiana University, (3) the Indiana Department of Education's teacher evaluation guidelines, and (4) evaluation plans used in three Indiana school districts. The three Indiana teacher evaluation programs fulfill the requirements set forth in HB 1360, yet each of the evaluation systems is unique in its approach to evaluating teachers. The focus of this bulletin is on teacher evaluation in general rather than on programs designed specifically for beginning teachers. (SI)

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POLICY BULLETIN

Consortium on Educational Policy Studies
BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA

ED297456

MODELS OF TEACHER EVALUATION

Patrick Slattery and Gayle Hall

Introduction

Teacher evaluation programs are receiving substantial attention at the state and local levels. This *Policy Bulletin* summarizes: (a) the Indiana law requiring teacher evaluation plans, (b) a recent study of teacher evaluation plans and techniques commissioned for the Indiana Department of Education by the Consortium on Educational Policy Studies at Indiana University (Barber, 1987), (c) the Indiana Department of Education's teacher evaluation guidelines, and (d) evaluation plans used in three Indiana school districts. The *Bulletin* focuses on teacher evaluation in general rather than on programs designed specifically for beginning teachers.[1]

Indiana Law and Teacher Evaluation

Section 9 of House Bill 1360 (HB 1360), enacted by the Indiana General Assembly in 1987, requires schools to implement staff evaluation plans as a condition of accreditation. According to HB 1360, each evaluation plan must provide for the growth of those evaluated, regular assessment of the plan's effectiveness, and annual evaluation of teachers. The bill also stipulates that teacher evaluation plans can be used by administrators in making employment decisions.

Additionally, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) must approve all plans, but if a school district already has a plan *specifically* described in a current multi-year employment contract with its certified teachers, that plan may stand as long as the contract is in effect. House Bill 1360 also stipulates that the IDOE will assist schools in implementing evaluation plans by: (a) establishing guidelines for periodic review of employees within each licensing category; (b) preparing a developmental plan for each category of employee; (c) providing technical assistance; (d) collecting and disseminating information about local, state, and national evaluation plans; and (e) assisting in training evaluators.

To accomplish these objectives, the IDOE has already reviewed the evaluation plans submitted by schools, made site visits to observe evaluation plans in action, and identified several evaluation plans as exemplary models. Furthermore, the IDOE has conducted five public forums for school personnel to clarify Indiana's teacher evaluation law, review guidelines for applying the law, and present evaluation models. While districts may choose to adopt one of the models, they have the option of designing an evaluation plan that meets their individual needs as long as it complies with state law.

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An Overview of Teacher Evaluation Plans

A study (Barber, 1987) commissioned for the IDOE by the Consortium on Educational Policy Studies provides information on teacher evaluation in public schools. The report summarizes the literature on teacher evaluation, examining: (a) qualities of successful programs, (b) problems often encountered in initiating teacher evaluation systems, (c) *formative* evaluation systems (to improve teachers' instructional skills) and *summative* systems (to make employment decisions), and (d) evaluation techniques. Only selected findings of the report are highlighted here. (The full report can be obtained from the Teacher Quality Division, IDOE.)

From his review of the literature, Barber reports that successful evaluation systems: (a) suit the educational goals, management style, conception of teaching, and community values of the school district; (b) require commitment from the community, the administration, the board, and the teachers' union; (c) encourage teacher involvement and responsibility; (d) match evaluation processes with objectives; and (e) separate formative and summative functions.

The report also identifies many of the reasons why teacher evaluation systems fail. Problems that administrators may confront include: (a) establishing an objective measurement of teacher performance; (b) tailoring evaluation to the unique needs of individual districts; (c) balancing the summative demands of administrators with the formative needs of teachers; (d) securing necessary time and money; (e) establishing continuity in the face of board and administrator turnover; and (f) handling grievances, confrontations, nepotism, and low teacher morale. Another major problem is that of failing to clearly define the act of teaching before identifying the teacher competencies to be assessed.

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The majority of teacher evaluation plans incorporate both summative and formative functions. However, evaluation plans are distinguished by the emphasis placed on one or the other function. For example, the Tupelo (MS) teacher evaluation plan (1984) is representative of plans discussed in the report that are primarily formative in function. In the Tupelo plan, the principal and other faculty members serve as formative evaluators and use peer evaluation techniques. The superintendent takes sole responsibility for making summative decisions. A formal evaluation is completed after 1 year for new teachers, and once every 3 years for experienced teachers. The instrument used by the principal, *Measuring Teacher Effectiveness: Evaluation Form* (Tupelo, 1984), focuses on how well students master material and how well teachers cover appropriate academic material, conduct class, and work with others. To complete the form, the principal reviews lesson plans and student exams and makes formal observations. The principal uses the completed form in a conference with the teacher, which serves as a formative review. Additionally, the principal randomly observes classroom performance and conducts informal formative discussions with teachers. When there is evidence that a deficiency is not being remedied, the evaluation may become summative in nature.

Barber notes that many teacher evaluation plans used in public schools, however, are much more summative than the Tupelo plan. For instance, the Mobile (AL) plan (1982) requires teachers to undergo at least one formal observation annually; after making the observation, the principal compiles a report and collects supporting documents. Using performance standards that focus on teaching skills, professional competence, interpersonal relationships, and personal qualities, the principal identifies any deficiencies. In conference, the teacher and the principal outline staff-development activities (e.g., demonstrations, assistance from a resource person, or provision of instructional materials) to correct the deficiencies. During the last 9 weeks of school, the principal determines how well the teacher has completed the plan and observes the teacher again to decide whether the teacher's contract is renewed or terminated.

In addition to reviewing teacher evaluation systems, Barber notes particular techniques for self-evaluation (which is primarily formative) and peer review (which can be either summative or formative). Among techniques for self-evaluation are videotape and audiotape feedback, self-rating forms, self-reports, modeling, interviewing, questionnaires, and consultation with an expert. Techniques for peer review include in-class observation, videotape observation, reports, conferences, coaching teams, interviewing, and computer analysis. Many of the techniques can be used for both self and peer evaluation.

Videotaping is one of the most popular and effective means of evaluation. The technique usually involves taping an actual teaching situation. If a "split" screen is used, the teacher and classroom response can be reviewed together. Usually, teachers who use videotaping for self-evaluation combine it with a self-rating or self-report. When videotaping is used for peer observation, the teacher and class are not distracted by observers in the room, and any number of evaluators can observe the same teaching performance.

Indiana Teacher Evaluation Plans

Although a few Indiana school districts have had staff evaluation plans for some time, HB 1360 has mandated that all Indiana school corporations develop teacher evaluation systems. To help school districts develop effective performance evaluation plans, the IDOE (1987) recently established the following guidelines. Local school districts should:

- develop goals and objectives that suit their needs;
- involve representatives from primary constituent groups within the district;
- determine the cost in terms of human and fiscal resources;
- identify, clarify, and match the purposes and processes of evaluation;
- establish evaluation criteria for each employment category (e.g., teacher, principal, superintendent, librarian, counselor);
- collect data suitable to the purpose of evaluation within each employment category;
- involve individual staff members in their own evaluation;
- individualize staff development plans based on evaluation results;
- use trained, competent, qualified evaluators; and
- make plans to regularly assess and modify the evaluation system as needed.

In addition to establishing guidelines, the IDOE selected 11 teacher evaluation plans to serve as exemplary models for other school districts. The 11 plans not only meet state requirements, but also emphasize unique characteristics of the evaluation process. For instance, the Brownsburg (IN) Community School Corporation plan (1984) highlights the separation of formative and summative procedures. The plan description stipulates that data collected from the formative appraisal plan "*shall not* be used in justifying a supervisor's recommendation for dismissal" (Brownsburg, 1984). Only the summative procedure can be used to make personnel decisions.

The summative component of the Brownsburg plan consists of evaluating teachers according to 21 minimum expectations (e.g., meeting and instructing students at the designated time and place, preparing written lesson plans, and displaying competence in the subject matter taught). Typically, the supervisor (i.e., the principal or principal's designee) evaluates a teacher according to these expectations through informal interactions. If a problem in one of the standard areas is identified, the supervisor reminds the teacher of the minimum expectations and provides assistance if the teacher continues to experience problems. The supervisor may issue a notice to the teacher describing the deficiency and use it to endorse a recommendation for suspension or dismissal if difficulties persist.

The formative component—designed to increase teacher effectiveness and student learning—has three parts: goal setting, appraisal, and the annual appraisal report. At the beginning of each year, every teacher, with the help of the supervisor, develops an improvement plan that becomes the focus of the teacher's appraisal. The teacher and supervisor select at least one goal from the *Teacher Effectiveness Criteria* list (Brownsburg, 1984) and determine the means for assessing progress (i.e., observation, artifact collection, student data). At the end of the year, the teacher and supervisor hold a final appraisal conference to discuss the year's activities and future goals, and the supervisor completes the annual appraisal report. Only first, second, and fifth year staff members must undergo all three assessment methods.

Another teacher evaluation model, the Tell City-Troy Township (IN) Corporation plan (1984), emphasizes the relationship between evaluation outcomes and teacher development. The philosophical assumptions behind this system are that "every person has potential for further growth and development" and that "focus should be upon the interaction of the teacher with the students at present and in developing present skills" (Tell City, 1984). First and second year teachers are evaluated annually, and permanent teachers once every 3 years.

A formal evaluation takes place at the end of the year. At the beginning of the year, however, the principal observes the teacher as often as possible. Halfway through the year, the principal holds a conference with the teacher to suggest specific steps he or she can take to improve teaching performance. In suggesting options for improving teaching, the principal draws from the *Checklist of Potential Improvement Options* (Tell City, 1984). The options include asking a teacher to: (a) observe other teachers, (b) serve as a model teacher for others to observe, (c) videotape his or her own performance, (d) practice skills involved with using audiovisual equipment, (e) complete additional coursework, (f) participate in encounter sessions to learn more about interpersonal relationships, (g) do research and contribute to professional journals, and (h) participate in professional conferences, seminars, or workshops. Follow-up conferences to assess progress can be scheduled prior to the formal evaluation if needed.

The Eastern Howard (IN) School Corporation's evaluation plan (1987), which is part of its career development program, exemplifies the IDOE's guideline that collaborative efforts (i.e., peer review, mentoring) can serve to validate and legitimize evaluation systems. Two kinds of support groups, an Intern Mentor Team and an Instructional Leadership Team, are responsible for conducting formative and summative evaluations. Both types of teams consist of several teachers and an administrator (i.e., principal, assistant principal).

Beginning teachers and those new to the school system (interns) work with an Intern Mentor Team. The intern's main source of support is a more established teacher who serves as a mentor and peer advisor. Intern teachers work on familiarizing themselves with effective teaching techniques; after gaining confidence, they videotape two lessons each semester. Following each taping session, the intern and his or her team review and discuss the intern's teaching techniques. Interns also keep journals, which the mentor and intern use as a basis for formative discussion. A formal summative evaluation, with an administrator serving as evaluator, takes place once a semester.

More advanced teachers work with an Instructional Leadership Team and have two classes videotaped each semester. After each taping session, the advanced teachers participate in a formative self-evaluation and peer review. These teachers also keep journals, which they submit to a faculty leader for formative review, and take part in a peer group and Instructional Leadership Team discussion about their teaching techniques. Every 3 years, advanced teachers undergo a summative review, which is conducted solely by the administrator.

The remaining eight teacher evaluation models identified by the IDOE (1987) and their respective unique emphases are: (a) Burris Laboratory School (financial incentive to reward superior performance); (b) Indianapolis Public Schools (comprehensive descriptors of performance for all job categories); (c) Tippecanoe County School Corporation (direct link between the outcomes of evaluation and teacher in-service programs); (d) Union County School Corporation (well-defined mentor program); (e) Wabash City Schools (variety of data-gathering sources for each job category); (f) MSD Wabash County (commitment of time, training, and other resources); (g) MSD Washington Township (periodic assessment of evaluators' reports); and (h) Whitko Community School Corporation (mutual goal setting).

Summary

Teacher evaluation is receiving substantial legislative attention, and there is an increasing body of literature describing various summative and formative evaluation strategies. While 41 states have implemented mandatory teacher evaluation programs (National Education Association, 1985), the design and implementation of these programs remains an activity largely controlled by local school corporations. Indiana's law, HB 1360, requires public schools to implement teacher performance evaluations as a condition of accreditation. The three Indiana teacher evaluation programs described in this *Policy Bulletin* fulfill the requirements set forth in HB 1360, yet each of the evaluation systems is unique in its approach to evaluating teachers. The flexibility built into HB 1360 allows each Indiana school corporation to address its unique goals and objectives while complying with the law. □

Note

1. The Beginning Teacher Internship Program, established by HB 1360 (Section 8), requires school corporations to implement plans to assist and evaluate first-year teachers. Internship plans are not discussed in this *Policy Bulletin* unless a specific internship program is designated to function as a part of a broader teacher evaluation program.

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POLICY BULLETIN No. 2
April 1988

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The **Consortium on Educational Policy Studies** is funded by the Lilly Endowment and the Indiana University School of Education and provides non-partisan information on policy issues of current concern to Indiana educators and policymakers.